

Appendix F: Recommendations for Coordinating Land Management Activities with Elk Habitat Preferences

The following information is based on recommendations from Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Timber Harvest Recommendations

1. Any silvicultural method that changes the vegetation so that it no longer meets the definition of cover should be confined to an area with a maximum width of 305 meters (1,000 feet) and should be bordered on all sides by cover not less than 243 meters (800 feet) width.
2. Regeneration harvest is usually preferred over other types of timber harvest techniques because it provides better forage and reduces the amount of future harvest activity in the area.
3. Maintain slash depth at less than 0.5 meters (1.5 feet) in order to minimize impact on elk movements, distribution and habitat use.
4. In appropriate habitat types, broadcast burn logging slash in the fall to get maximum elk forage protection.
5. Plan timber sales so maximum duration of disturbance in any one area is two years in succession. This can be accomplished with smaller sales, or scheduling larger sales by compartment in a certain sequence through contract stipulations. This would eliminate random logging over the entire sale area.
6. Refrain from logging areas when elk would normally be using them, if feasible. For example, do not log important summer habitat during that season especially if a viable option is to log during the winter.
7. If summer logging is planned on elk summer range, provide adjacent security areas at least as large as the area being disturbed for the animals to move to during periods of timber harvest and/or road building activity. Try to provide a ridge line between the disturbed area and security area. It is preferable to have several adjacent security areas available.

Road Recommendations

8. When major elk trails are bisected by roads, crossings should be provided across cut and fill slopes so they do not exceed natural gradients. This is especially necessary when cut slopes are over 2.5 meters (8 feet) high and/or have a greater than $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 slope.
9. Vegetation removal along road sides should not extend any further from road edge than necessary for logging activities.
10. Slash depths adjacent to roads in cleared rights-of-ways should not exceed 0.5 meters (1.5 feet) in depth. In areas where this level of slash disposal is impractical, openings 16 feet wide thru the slash at 61 meter (200 foot) intervals are recommended, especially on ridges and trail crossings.
11. Maintain a minimum 91 meter (300 foot) buffer strip between open forest roads and openings which serve as feeding areas.

12. Roads that are to remain open should have two sight distance buffers adjacent to saddles, meadows, riparian areas, and ridge tops as these are usually major elk use areas. One sight distance hides 90% of an elk at 61 meters (200 feet).
13. New road construction should be temporary in nature and permanently closed/re-contoured when work is completed unless the new road is part of an extensive access management plan.
14. Install gates at onset of road building activity when the objective is to prevent human use patterns from becoming established. These gates should be closed and locked during any period of logging inactivity exceeding 24 hours.
15. Inform the public by all types of news media, including signs on gates, about reasons for and dates of road closures.
16. Replace gates with re-contoured slopes after logging activity where maximum elk security and habitat use is desired.
17. Revegetate the driving surface as well as cut and fill slopes on permanently closed roads.
18. Maintain buffer strips (that will qualify as hiding cover if possible) along roads left open during the normal elk use period. These buffers should be at least two sight distances wide when separating the road from an opening. One sight distance hides 90% of an elk at 61 meters (200 feet).

Protecting Special Habitat Components

19. Consult a wildlife biologist about the occurrence and/or importance of special habitat components on a case by case basis.
20. Maintain the value of licks and wallows by buffering from disturbance for at least two site distances. One sight distance hides 90% of an elk at 61 meters (200) feet.
21. Do not permit activities such as timber harvest, livestock grazing, or road building on established calving and rearing areas during the period of May 1 through July 15.
22. Protect known major elk travel routes with buffer strips on either side for at least two site distances. One sight distance hides 90% of an elk at 61 meters (200 feet).